

**BEST AVAILABLE COPY**REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted supplementary to the previous Amendment and in connection with the interview with the Examiner.

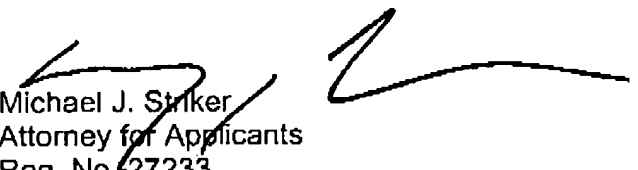
During the interview it was determined that additional clarification of the features of claim 1 would be needed to clearly distinguish the present invention from the prior art. In connection with this, claim 1 has been amended with the present Amendment. It is specifically defined now in claim 1 that the metal coating of the corresponding abutment surface is a hard coating which is applied on and connected with the abutment surface. This is definitely not the case for a gasket disclosed in the patent to Shaudoreielle, which is formed as a separate, independent element.

It is therefore believed that claim 1 should be considered as patentably distinguishing over the art and should be allowed.

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application is most respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner require or consider it advisable that the specification, claims and/or drawings be further amended or corrected in formal respects in order to place this case in condition for final allowance, then it is respectfully requested that such amendments or corrections be carried out by Examiner's Amendment, and the case be passed to issue. Alternatively, should the Examiner feel that a personal discussion might be helpful in advancing this case to allowance, he is invited to telephone the undersigned (at 631-549-4700).

Respectfully submitted,



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